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# MEDICAL MISSION SERIES.

## HOSPITALS IN SYRIA.



Nurses and Patients, Women's Hospital, Beirut. American Nurse on Left.

The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society  
Of the Presbyterian Church,  
501 Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia

## STATISTICS, 1907

TRIPOLI—Hospital, Dispensary, . . . Ira Harris, M. D.

JUNIEH—Hospital (Women), Dispensary, Mary Pierson Eddy, M. D.

Total number of patients treated during year, 9,461



STAR OF KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN.

## HOSPITALS IN SYRIA.



THE medical work of our Church is smaller in Syria than in some other fields, because of the presence in Beirut of the noble Johanniter Hospital, with its spacious buildings and fine facilities. The management of this hospital affords a happy illustration of coöperation in benevolence. The property is owned and the hospital maintained by the Johanniter Order, popularly known as the Knights of St. John, whose head is the Emperor of Germany. The nurses are provided by the deaconesses of Kaiserwerth, and the medical and surgical staff, numbering six American doctors and two instructors, by the Syrian Protestant College at Beirut. Dr. George E. Post, the senior member of the medical staff, is known throughout Syria, and he and his associates have made the hospital a power for righteousness.

The medical department of the College gives a most thorough four years' course. The effect of this is seen in the steadily advancing standard of medical training throughout Syria. In the year 1906-1907 there were over one hundred medical students in the College, and about forty in the pharmaceutical department. Each year an Imperial Commissioner is appointed from

the Constantinople Medical University to examine and confer degrees upon all the worthy graduates, who may then practice in any part of Turkey or Egypt.

As the need for expansion was manifest, the Maria de Witt Jessup Hospitals for women and children were opened in 1905, in a temporary home. In the autumn of 1907 a new women's pavilion was completed; the foundations are laid for an eye and ear pavilion, and soon the new hospital for children will be commenced. Mrs. Gerald F. Dale, Jr., is the superintendent of these hospitals.

The services of an American nurse, trained in the New York Post-Graduate Hospital, have been secured, and a Nurses' Training School for Syrian Girls has been established.

"I can never call myself a Moslem again," said a woman who had been ill a long time in the women's ward, "for I love Christ and wish to follow him." And when she returned to her distant home, the missionary near there wrote that she was asking for admission to the Christian Church.

The work of Dr. Mary P. Eddy is also associated with Beirut station. On returning to her native Syria in 1893, after a most thorough medical course in the United States, Dr. Eddy succeeded by long patience in obtaining the degree of doctor of medicine and surgery from the Turkish government, with permission to practice anywhere in the Empire. This was the first government degree ever given to a woman. For some years Dr. Eddy spent most of her time in medical and evangelistic tours throughout the entire mission field. In her own graphic words, she says:—

"Long before 5 A. M., on summer days, my tent is surrounded by waiting throngs who wonder audibly, 'Why the *hakimeh* sleeps so late?' It is a heart-breaking multitude—the blind groping their way, the helpless borne by friends, pitiful looking babes carried by their mothers, and tottering old people led by their children. Clinic hours are often extended until 4 P. M., and then comes the irksome task of filling the long row of waiting bottles, with a Syrian maiden for my sole assistant. By the time the mixtures, powders, eye washes, and ointments are labeled and ranged in order the evening has come and the village claims us for its own. All are welcome; the elders range themselves under the large Bible pictures on the wall; the children fill every available inch. One little corner is kept near the window for the organ and myself. When the evening gathering has been closed, letters and orders must be prepared and dispatched by a messenger to the nearest post office before sleep can be wooed.

"At one time the waiting groups were startled by the sudden irruption of the robber chief who held the whole country side in his sway. Accompanied by a dozen tall, fierce followers, armed like himself to the teeth, he entered the room seeking aid for one of the number who had an ugly scalp wound and a finger nearly severed. They gazed curiously at the shelves filled with bottles and boxes; they looked askance at the strange glittering instruments; they stared at the sterilizing apparatus in the deep window recess, and the traveling chests arranged for an operating table. 'Mashallah!' says the leader. 'Has your country many daughters like you? Truly, *our* work is but to despoil and deface; *yours* is to restore and repair.'

"In one place where I had straightened the cross-eyes of a number of maidens a Moslem said to me, 'You have provided those destitute ones with homes by your skill; you have laid up more merit in heaven than if you had journeyed to Mecca!'"

In 1903 Dr. Eddy opened a hospital and dispensary for women at Junieh, fifteen miles across the bay from Beirut. This is a Maronite stronghold, surrounded by two hundred and sixty-seven towns and villages, where no Protestant had ever



Hospital at Junieh, Syria.

been allowed to live. After four years of work, the prejudice of the people has been transformed into marked friendliness; the medical work is firmly established; there are regular Sabbath services; schools for the boys and girls; a Bible Society

colporteur working in the villages; a Bible woman to visit in the neighborhood and among the patients. On the hospital premises are a resting room, a guest chamber for missionaries, a reading room and a Bible depository. Regular clinics are held for Moslem women. Many Kurds and Bedouin also attend. These wanderers have learned to trust Dr. Eddy, and when their tents are invaded by illness they take refuge in her vicinity.

"In February we had a fearful storm along our coast. In the morning, above the sound of the breakers we heard the cries of a woman in distress. With difficulty I pushed my blind open, and directly under my window was a black haircloth tent soaked with rain, a poor woman seated in the door, and on the wet ground by her side a tiny baby wrapped only in rags. The husband and father had gone to beg their breakfast. It did not take long to diagnose the nature of their immediate needs. I had just finished two baby wrappers. One of these I rolled into a tight ball and threw it with such force that, despite the wind, it reached its destination, and the baby was wrapped in it before the hot soup for the mother and a warm blanket for the baby could be taken down by the road. The name of my little guest was Khalil Ullah, 'the friend of God.' Two years ago, in fulfilment of a vow, the father and mother had set out for Jerusalem. Poverty and ignorance of the language made their progress slow. It was a year before they saw the Holy City, but what mattered privation and weariness? Their petitions had been heard, their vow accepted; and their poverty was forgotten when the little boy, asked from the God of Abraham, came to their tent. The terrific storm endangered the mother's life, and she was very ill for some days. She was so grateful and patient, and it was a new sensation for us, who daily teach Bible stories to our nominally Christian neighbors, to be asked by this Kurdish woman if we had ever heard of her boy's famous ancestor Abraham, the Friend of God. I told her that I too had often been a dweller in tents, and that I never sat in the tent door at the close of day without thinking of Abraham. She firmly believed that the care and help she received were in answer to her prayers the night of the storm, and both she and the baby endeared themselves greatly to us. After we and they have finished with these frail earthly tabernacles, shall our feet tread together the streets of that Eternal City of which we talked to each other?"

The Asfuriyeh, the only hospital for the insane in Syria, was founded in 1896 by Mr. Theophilus Waldmeier. It occupies twenty acres of land in a beautiful situation three miles from Beirut, with seven buildings and seventy patients. The funds were raised in Europe and the United States, and the hospital is controlled by a central committee in London, with branches in all counties. This hospital is an untold blessing to Syria, and men of all sects are loud in its praise. Recently the favorite

preacher of the Patriarch of Antioch was seized with violent mania, and it was necessary to take him by force to Asfuriyeh. By patient and skillful treatment he was completely restored, and his gratitude knew no bounds.

"I had been taught," he said, "that Protestants were devils, and I find they are angels! How can I ever repay you?" His cure made a deep impression throughout the country. About half the running expenses of the hospital is paid by the patients, the rest is given by its friends.

Outside of Beirut and its vicinity our only extensive medical work is at Tripoli. This work was begun in 1863 by Dr. George E. Post. When he left to assist in organizing the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut, his place was taken by Dr. G. B. Danforth (1871-1875), and afterward by Dr. C. W. Calhoun (1879-1883). After Dr. Calhoun's death, his work was taken up by Dr. Ira Harris, who has carried it on ever since.

The Tripoli Hospital has thirty-five beds. Only surgical cases are now taken there; the medical patients are housed in a rented building near by. Religious services are held in the hospital chapel, and a Bible woman teaches the women patients. In the crowded Meena (harbor) a dispensary reaches the motley seaport population. The Greek bishop, visiting the Meena, declared: "Those Americans know how to make religion interesting to the people. They use means that are noble and good; they treat the sick and cure the deformed, and by such means they make Protestants."

The two busy times in the year for doctors in Syria are the days following the Moslem fast of Ramazan and those after the long Lent of the eastern Christians. The reaction from fasting to unbridled feasting plays havoc with the digestive organs. Tubercular diseases, both medical and surgical, are largely increasing. The treatment, in view of the almost mortal fear awakened in the patients by the very name of consumption, gives much thought and anxiety.

When the traveling season opens, long tours are made in the surrounding country. Up and down the slopes of "all Lebanon toward the sun rising, from Mount Hermon unto the entering in of Hamath," the good doctor is known and loved, and the sick and suffering are brought to him, just as they were brought to his Master in Gospel days. The patients are

of all tribes and faiths—Moslem, Nusairy, Metawaly, Greek, Protestant, Maronite, Catholic, Syrian—all one in their human sufferings and needs. Dr. Harris says of one trip:—

“At Hums the large room that is ordinarily used for the church services becomes the temporary hospital. An operating table is set up; a portable sterilizing apparatus, a generous supply of instruments, two trunks, one filled with medicines the other with Bibles and tracts, and all is ready. The crowd fills the room and the court on which it opens. Each one does his best to get to the doctor. There are a number of Holy Men who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca, the head Sheikh of Hums, the town judge, military officers and leading citizens, and many, many poor diseased and deformed creatures.

“We were here five weeks. As the days passed it became necessary to hire a larger building. In all about three thousand patients were treated. Daily services were held with them, Moslems and all, and special evening meetings at the church.

“At Hamath are very many miserably poor people, living in rooms dug out of the chalk cliffs along the river. Words fail to describe their poverty and wretchedness. They are a prey to diseases of all sorts, especially those of the eye. Quacks ply their trade unhindered, and many lose their sight and often their lives from the ignorant treatment.”

Dr. James Wells of Glasgow says: “Syria has been called the fifth gospel, because it affords so many illustrations of the New Testament accounts. But there is a newer and more radiant gospel revealed through the medical missionaries, whose work is the very incarnation of the doctrine of Christ.”

Price, 3 cents; 30 cents a dozen.